

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) An operating mechanism for a movable closure element to releasably engage a strike assembly on a frame support and thereby releasably maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in a predetermined position relative to the frame support, the operating mechanism comprising:

a base comprising an elongate portion with a first axis and a wall extending around the first axis and defining [[a]] an elongate tubular passageway;

a latch system on the base and having (a) a latched state in which the latch system engages a strike element on the strike assembly so as to maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in the predetermined position and (b) a released state wherein the latch system can be disengaged from a strike element so as to allow a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted to be moved from the predetermined position; and

an actuating system on the base and changeable from a first state into a second state to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system comprising at least a first link which is movable axially within the passage from a first position into a second position to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system further comprising an actuating assembly for the at least first link that can be directed radially through the wall on the base into operative

engagement with the base without requiring separate fasteners to maintain the operative engagement between the actuating assembly and the base,

the actuating system comprising an actuating element that is pivotable relative to the base to thereby cause the first link to move from the first position into the second position.

2. (Currently amended) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 1 wherein the actuating system comprises a second link that can be operatively engaged with the at least first link within the passageway without requiring separate fasteners.

3. (Currently amended) An operating mechanism for a movable closure element to releasably engage a strike assembly on a frame support and thereby releasably maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in a predetermined position relative to the frame support, the operating mechanism comprising:

a base comprising an elongate portion with a first axis and a wall extending around the first axis and defining a passageway;

a latch system on the base and having (a) a latched state in which the latch system engages a strike element on the strike assembly so as to maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in the predetermined position and (b) a released state wherein the latch system can be disengaged from a strike element so as to allow a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted to be moved from the predetermined position; and

an actuating system on the base and changeable from a first state into a second state to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system comprising at least a first link, having a substantially rigid fixed shape, which is movable axially within the passage from a first position into a second position to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system further comprising an actuating assembly for the at least first link that can be directed radially through the wall on the base into operative engagement with the base without requiring separate fasteners to maintain the operative engagement between the actuating assembly and the base,

wherein the actuating system comprises a second link that can be operatively engaged with the at least first link without requiring separate fasteners,

wherein the second link has a receptacle for supporting a part of the at least first link for pivoting movement about a second axis that is transverse to the first axis.

4. (Currently amended) ~~[[The]]~~ An operating mechanism for a movable closure element ~~according to claim 3 to releasably engage a strike assembly on a frame support and thereby releasably maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in a predetermined position relative to the frame support, the operating mechanism comprising:~~

a base comprising an elongate portion with a first axis and a wall extending around the first axis and defining a passageway;

a latch system on the base and having (a) a latched state in which the latch system engages a strike element on the strike assembly so as to maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in the predetermined position and (b) a released state wherein the latch system can be disengaged from a strike element so as to allow a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted to be moved from the predetermined position; and

an actuating system on the base and changeable from a first state into a second state to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system comprising at least a first link which is movable axially within the passage from a first position into a second position to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system further comprising an actuating assembly for the at least first link that can be directed radially through the wall on the base into operative engagement with the base without requiring separate fasteners to maintain the operative engagement between the actuating assembly and the base,

wherein the actuating system comprises a second link that can be operatively engaged with the at least first link without requiring separate fasteners,

wherein the second link has a receptacle for supporting a part of the at least first link for pivoting movement about a second axis that is transverse to the first axis,

wherein the second link has a slot communicating with the receptacle and extending radially relative to the second axis from the receptacle.

5. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 4 wherein the actuating assembly comprises an actuating element that is repositionable relative to the base between a normal position and an actuated position, and the second link is connected to the actuating element.

6. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 5 wherein the second link is connected to the actuating element for relative pivoting movement around a third axis.

7. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 6 wherein the third axis is substantially parallel to the second axis.

8. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 6 wherein the actuating element is movable relative to the base around a fourth axis.

9. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 6 wherein the slot extends radially along a line relative to the second axis from the second axis, the second link is movable relative to the base around a fourth axis between first and second orientations, the second link is in the first orientation with the actuating element in the normal position and in the second orientation with the actuating element in the actuated position, and with the second link in and between the first and

second orientations, a line of a force acting between the second link and the part of the at least first link is non-parallel to the line of the slot.

10. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 9 wherein the second link has an end that slides axially relative to the first axis guidingly along the wall as the actuating element is repositioned between the normal and actuated positions.

11. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 10 wherein the wall has a first opening bounded by an edge with a thickness, the actuating system further comprises a frame with first and second oppositely facing surfaces, the actuating element is mounted for pivoting movement relative to the frame around the fourth axis, and at least a part of the frame is deformable so that as the frame is pressed into the wall, the at least part of the frame changes from an undeformed state into a deformed state to allow the first surface on the frame to move past the edge and thereafter reassume the undeformed state so that the edge of the wall is captive between the first and second surfaces whereupon the actuating assembly is in the operative engagement with the base.

12. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 11 wherein the first and second surfaces are spaced by a distance that is approximately the same as the thickness of the edge.

13. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 11 wherein the second surface extends substantially fully around the wall opening and bears against a surface on the base that faces radially outwardly relative to the first axis.

14. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 9 wherein the part of the at least first link has a diameter, the slot has a width, and the slot width is less than the diameter of the part of the at least first link.

15. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 11 wherein the wall has an annular, outwardly facing surface and there is no opening in the outwardly facing surface diametrically opposite to the first opening.

16. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 9 wherein the actuating system comprises a frame to which the actuating element is mounted for pivoting movement around the fourth axis and the housing is reversibly mountable in first and second different positions relative to the base so that the actuating element pivots in opposite directions around the fourth axis as the actuating element is repositioned from the normal position into the actuated position with the housing in the first and second different positions.

17. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 15 wherein the actuating system further comprises a spring acting

between the actuating element and the second link for normally urging the second link towards the first orientation.

18. (Currently amended) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 1 wherein the base comprises a tubular element that defines the elongate tubular passage and elongate portion and first and second supports for the tubular element that are spaced axially relative to the first axis.

19. (Currently amended) An operating mechanism for a movable closure element to releasably engage a strike assembly on a frame support and thereby releasably maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in a predetermined position relative to the frame support, the operating mechanism comprising:

a base comprising an elongate portion with a first axis and a wall extending around the first axis and defining a passageway;

a latch system on the base and having (a) a latched state in which the latch system engages a strike element on the strike assembly so as to maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in the predetermined position and (b) a released state wherein the latch system can be disengaged from a strike element so as to allow a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted to be moved from the predetermined position; and

an actuating system on the base and changeable from a first state into a second state to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system comprising at least a first link which is movable axially within the passage from a first position into a second position to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system further comprising an actuating assembly for the at least first link that can be directed radially through the wall on the base into operative engagement with the base without requiring separate fasteners to maintain the operative engagement between the actuating assembly and the base,

wherein the base comprises a tubular element that defines the elongate portion and first and second supports for the tubular element that are spaced axially relative to the first axis,

wherein the tubular element is releasably connectable to each of the first and second supports to allow selective connection of tubular elements of different configuration to the first and second supports,

wherein the latch system is on the first support and the first support and tubular element are configured so that the tubular element can be operatively connected to the first support without requiring separate fasteners.

20. (Currently amended) An operating mechanism for a movable closure element to releasably engage a strike assembly on a frame support and thereby releasably maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in a predetermined position relative to the frame support, the operating mechanism comprising:

a base comprising an elongate portion with a first axis and a wall extending around the first axis and defining a passageway;

a latch system on the base and having (a) a latched state in which the latch system engages a strike element on the strike assembly so as to maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in the predetermined position and (b) a released state wherein the latch system can be disengaged from a strike element so as to allow a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted to be moved from the predetermined position; and

an actuating system on the base and changeable from a first state into a second state to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system comprising at least a first link which is movable axially within the passage from a first position into a second position to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system further comprising an actuating assembly for the at least first link that can be directed radially through the wall on the base into operative engagement with the base without requiring separate fasteners to maintain the operative engagement between the actuating assembly and the base,

wherein the base comprises a tubular element that defines the elongate portion and first and second supports for the tubular element that are spaced axially relative to the first axis,

wherein the tubular element can be selectively connected to the first support in first and second different, predetermined angular orientations around the first axis.

21. (Currently amended) ~~[[The]]~~ An operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 20 to releasably engage a strike assembly on a frame support and thereby releasably maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in a predetermined position relative to the frame support, the operating mechanism comprising:

a base comprising an elongate portion with a first axis and a wall extending around the first axis and defining a passageway;

a latch system on the base and having (a) a latched state in which the latch system engages a strike element on the strike assembly so as to maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in the predetermined position and (b) a released state wherein the latch system can be disengaged from a strike element so as to allow a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted to be moved from the predetermined position; and

an actuating system on the base and changeable from a first state into a second state to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system comprising at least a first link which is movable axially within the passage from a first position into a second position to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system further comprising an actuating assembly for the at least first link that can be directed radially through the wall on the base into operative engagement with the base without requiring separate fasteners to maintain the operative engagement between the actuating assembly and the base.

wherein the base comprises a tubular element that defines the elongate portion and first and second supports for the tubular element that are spaced axially relative to the first axis.

wherein the tubular element can be selectively connected to the first support in first and second different, predetermined angular orientations.

wherein the tubular element is releasably connectable to the first support without requiring any separate fasteners and with the tubular element connected to the first support and the first and second supports mounted to a closure element, the tubular element and first support cannot be separated from each other.

22. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 3 wherein the second link exerts a tensile force on the at least first link as the at least first link is moved from the first position into the second position.

23. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 3 wherein the second link exerts a compressive force on the at least first link as the at least first link is moved from the first position into the second position.

24. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 3 wherein the at least first link has an elongate portion with a free end and the part of the at least first link is spaced from the free end.

25. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 24 wherein the elongate portion has a substantially straight section extending along a first line substantially parallel to the first axis and the part of the at least first link extends transversely to the first line along a second line.

26. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 25 wherein the at least first link has a free end section which projects a) along a third line that is transverse to the second line and b) to the free end of the elongate portion.

27. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 26 wherein the first and third lines are substantially parallel to each other.

28. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 26 wherein the elongate portion of the at least first link is connected to the second link by directing the elongate portion of the at least first link through the receptacle by relatively reorienting the at least first link and second link, while relatively moving the elongate portion of the at least first link and second link along the first and second lines as the elongate portion of the at least first link is directed through the receptacle.

29. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 1 in combination with a movable closure element to which the operating mechanism is attached.

30. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 29 further in combination with a frame support having a strike assembly, the movable element mounted for movement between the predetermined position and a second position, with the latch system engaging the strike assembly with the movable element in the predetermined position.

31. (currently amended) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 1 wherein the wall has an opening bounded by an edge and the actuating system further comprises a frame comprises with a wall and a transverse flange that cover the edge so that the edge is not exposed to a user of the operating mechanism.

32. (original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 11 wherein the base comprises a first tubular element with an outside surface having a first diameter through which the first opening is formed and further in combination with a second tubular element having an outside surface through which a second opening corresponding to the first opening is formed, the second tubular element having a second diameter that is different than the first diameter, and the frame can be

selectively pressed into the first and second openings to place the actuating assembly into operative engagement with the base.

33. (original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 32 wherein the second link has first configuration and further in combination with an interchangeable link having a configuration that is different than that of the second link and that is useable in place of the second link with the actuating assembly in operative engagement with the base using the second tubular element.

34. (Currently amended) An operating mechanism for a movable closure element to releasably engage a strike assembly on a frame support and thereby releasably maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in a predetermined position relative to the frame support, the operating mechanism comprising:

a base comprising an elongate portion with a first axis and a wall extending around the first axis and defining a passageway;

a latch system on the base and having (a) a latched state in which the latch system engages a strike element on the strike assembly so as to maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in the predetermined position and (b) a released state wherein the latch system can be disengaged from a strike element so as to allow a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted to be moved from the predetermined position; [and]

an actuating system on the base and changeable from a first state into a second state to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system comprising at least a first link which is movable axially within the passage from a first position into a second position to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system further comprising an actuating assembly for the at least first link and comprising a second link that can be operatively connected to the at least first link without requiring separate fasteners,

the actuating system comprising an actuating element that is pivotable relative to the base to thereby cause the first link to move from the first position into the second position; and

a spring element acting between the actuating element and second link to urge the actuating element in pivoting movement relative to the base.

35. (Currently amended) An operating mechanism for a movable closure element to releasably engage a strike assembly on a frame support and thereby releasably maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in a predetermined position relative to the frame support, the operating mechanism comprising:

a base comprising an elongate portion with a first axis and a wall extending around the first axis and defining a passageway;

a latch system on the base and having (a) a latched state in which the latch system engages a strike element on the strike assembly so as to maintain a movable

closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in the predetermined position and (b) a released state wherein the latch system can be disengaged from a strike element so as to allow a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted to be moved from the predetermined position; [[and]]

an actuating system on the base and changeable from a first state into a second state to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system comprising at least a first link which is movable axially within the passage from a first position into a second position to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system further comprising an actuating assembly for the at least first link and comprising a second link that can be operatively connected to the at least first link without requiring separate fasteners,

wherein the second link has a receptacle for supporting a part of the at least first link for pivoting movement about a second axis that is transverse to the first axis; and
a spring element acting between the actuating element and second link to urge the actuating element in pivoting movement relative to the base.

36. (Currently amended) [[The]] An operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 35 to releasably engage a strike assembly on a frame support and thereby releasably maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in a predetermined position relative to the frame support, the operating mechanism comprising:

a base comprising an elongate portion with a first axis and a wall extending around the first axis and defining a passageway;

a latch system on the base and having (a) a latched state in which the latch system engages a strike element on the strike assembly so as to maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in the predetermined position and (b) a released state wherein the latch system can be disengaged from a strike element so as to allow a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted to be moved from the predetermined position; and

an actuating system on the base and changeable from a first state into a second state to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state.

the actuating system comprising at least a first link which is movable axially within the passage from a first position into a second position to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state.

the actuating system further comprising an actuating assembly for the at least first link and comprising a second link that can be operatively connected to the at least first link without requiring separate fasteners.

wherein the second link has a receptacle for supporting a part of the at least first link for pivoting movement about a second axis that is transverse to the first axis.

wherein the second link has a slot communicating with the receptacle and extending radially relative to the second axis from the receptacle.

37. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 35 wherein the actuating assembly comprises an actuating element that is repositionable relative to the base between a normal position and an actuated position, and the second link is connected to the actuating element.

38. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 37 wherein the second link is connected to the actuating element for relative pivoting movement around a third axis.

39. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 38 wherein the third axis is substantially parallel to the second axis.

40. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 38 wherein the actuating element is movable relative to the base around a fourth axis.

41. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 40 wherein the second link has an end that slides axially relative to the first axis guidingly along the wall as the actuating element is repositioned between the normal and actuated positions.

42. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 41 wherein the second link is movable selectively reversibly mountable

for movement in opposite directions around the fourth axis as the actuating element is changed from the normal position into the release position.

43. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 41 wherein the actuating system further comprises a spring acting between the actuating element and the second link for normally urging the second link in movement around the third axis.

44. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 41 wherein the second link exerts a tensile force on the at least first link as the at least first link is moved from the first position into the second position.

45. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 41 wherein the second link exerts a compressive force on the at least first link as the at least first link is moved from the first position into the second position.

46. (previously presented) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 35 wherein the at least first link has an elongate portion with a free end and the part of the at least first link is spaced from the free end.

47. (Currently amended) An operating mechanism for a movable closure element to releasably engage a strike assembly on a frame support and thereby releasably

maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in a predetermined position relative to the frame support, the operating mechanism comprising:

a base comprising an elongate portion with a first axis and a wall extending around the first axis and defining a passageway;

a latch system on the base and having (a) a latched state in which the latch system engages a strike element on the strike assembly so as to maintain a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted in the predetermined position and (b) a released state wherein the latch system can be disengaged from a strike element so as to allow a movable closure element on which the operating mechanism is mounted to be moved from the predetermined position; and

an actuating system on the base and changeable from a first state into a second state to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system comprising at least a first link, having a substantially rigid fixed shape, which is movable axially within the passage from a first position into a second position to thereby change the latch system from the latched state into the released state,

the actuating system further comprising an actuating assembly for the at least first link and comprising a second link that can be operatively connected to the at least first link without requiring separate fasteners,

wherein the second link has a receptacle for supporting a part of the at least first link for pivoting movement about a second axis that is transverse to the first axis,

wherein the at least first link has an elongate portion with a free end and the part of the at least first link is spaced from the free end,

wherein the elongate portion has a substantially straight section extending along a first line substantially parallel to the first axis and the part of the at least first link extends transversely to the first line along a second line.

48. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 47 wherein the at least first link has a free end section which projects a) along a third line that is transverse to the second line and b) to the free end of the elongate portion.

49. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 48 wherein the first and third lines are substantially parallel to each other.

50. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 48 wherein the elongate portion of the at least first link is connected to the second link by directing the elongate portion of the at least first link through the receptacle by relatively reorienting the at least first link and second link, while relatively moving the elongate portion of the at least first link and second link along the first and second lines as the elongate portion of the at least first link is directed through the receptacle.

51. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 34 in combination with a movable closure element to which the operating mechanism is attached.

52. (Original) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 51 further in combination with a frame support having a strike assembly, the movable closure element mounted for movement between the predetermined position and a second position, with the latch system engaging the strike assembly with the movable element in the predetermined position.

53. (new) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 1 wherein the first link is an elongate element with a substantially rigid, fixed shape.

54. (new) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 1 wherein the actuating element is configured to be joined to the first link without requiring the use of separate fasteners.

55. (new) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 53 wherein the first link has a bent end that can be directed through the first link.

56. (new) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 2 wherein a spring element acts between the actuating element and second link to urge the actuating element in pivoting movement relative to the base.

57. (new) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 6 wherein a spring element acts between the actuating element and second link to urge the actuating element towards the normal position.

58. (new) The operating mechanism for a movable closure element according to claim 47 wherein a spring element acts between the actuating element and second link to urge the actuating element in pivoting movement relative to the base.